

struggle on, in the conviction that it was preferable to suffer and risk all for the great cause rather than be beguiled into its betrayal. He bade St Aldegonde, who pressed him to patch up an accommodation, remember the maxim of the Council of Constance, that no faith is to be kept with heretics. His appeal to history in support of his contention was only too well founded.

The artifice failed, and the advent of Requesens changed nothing, though it interspersed a lengthy and fruitless diplomatic campaign with the gigantic conflict by sea and land. Diplomacy was not to decide the issue of that conflict, in which not merely national antagonisms but divergent political principles were involved. William and his heroic Hollanders fought for Protestantism and political liberty; Philip and his representatives for political and religious despotism. Philip and William stood on the opposite sides of the impassable gulf made by the Reformation in the history of the nations, and every attempt to bridge it by such expedients as the Religious Peace of Passau and the Edict of Nantes was but a makeshift. William the Silent read correctly the future as well as the present when he clung to his minimum, and refused to entertain any accommodation short of it. The Thirty Years' War and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes amply justify his foresight and his firmness. He was in reality championing the liberties of Western Europe as well as of these small half-drowned provinces. If Holland succumbed, Germany, and even England, would, he believed, sooner or later be exposed to a like fate. The Armada and the Thirty Years' War were to show that he had correctly read the drift of events. If England did not succumb to the Invincible Armada, she had to thank the heroism of these tough Hollanders whom Elizabeth patronised and forsook by turns, as well as the strength of her own resources in her hour of peril. It was the tenacity of these Hollanders that wore down the power of Spain, and weakened the blow that Philip at length struck across the Channel.

Meanwhile, William and his heroic Hollanders and Zea-landers were left to rely on their own indomitable pluck and what help they could wring, through Louis of Nassau, from the French king, whom the prospect of conquest at Philip's